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ABSTRACT

Three writing projects in the state of Oregon, each of which uses a different approach to the teaching of writing, are described in this report. The first section of the report deals with the Coos County ESD Composition Improvement Project, which focuses on writing as a three-step process involving prewriting, writing, and postwriting. The section provides a brief history of the Project, discusses the development of its skill development kits and details its achievements. The second section concerns the Valley Educational Consortium Writing Project, which concentrates on a goal-based instructional management system that stresses basic writing conventions and modes of discourse. Following a brief history of the Project, the section discusses the instructional materials it has developed, reviews its assessment procedures, and presents its achievements. The final section of the report covers the Oregon Writing Project, which concentrates on staff development. The section discusses the Project's history, philosophy and structure, teaching strategies, influence in Oregon schools, and achievements. (FL)

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# OSSC BULLETIN

## A Survey of Three Oregon Writing Projects

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# Preface

During the past year, the Oregon School Study Council has featured in its monthly Bulletins exemplary instructional programs in mathematics and reading. This Bulletin completes the look at the "Three R's" in Oregon by covering the area of writing.

Each of the three writing programs featured is the result of the participation of more than one district. The Composition Improvement Project combines the efforts of North Bend and Coos Bay school districts under the direction of the Coos County ESD. The Valley Educational Consortium, a federation of several school districts, ESD's, Western Oregon State College, and Teaching Research Division of the State Department of Education, has developed a goal-based writing curriculum and is in the process of carefully examining several assessment procedures for that curriculum. The Oregon Writing Project has affected teachers, administrators, and curriculums all over the state.

It is hoped that individual school districts that are working to strengthen or revise their own writing programs will make use of the insights and resources provided by these three programs.

The author, Virginia Shaumleffel, is a former high school English teacher and currently works as an OSSC graduate research assistent.

Philip K. Piele
Executive Secretary

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We would like to thank especially the following people who not only answered questions, but also provided research materials: Glen Fielding from Teaching Research Division, Monmouth; Esther Heilbronner, Sublimity Elementary School; Marilyn Olson, Lane County ESD; Nathaniel Teich, University of Oregon; Ann Ulum, Coos County ESD; and Patty Wixon, Central Point School District.

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# Introduction

The decline of writing skills has become a national educational concern. The increasing numbers of college freshmen who have to take remedial composition courses, the lack of clarity in office memos, the doubletalk and jargon from the pens of government officials all point to the need to teach young people to write vividly, precisely, coherently, and correctly. Eloquently written self-expression is a valuable skill for it allows a person not only to communicate successfully with others, but also to consider and reconsider personal ideas, values, and goals.

Many school districts in Oregon have developed or are developing effective writing programs to teach students this valuable skill. A survey of all the individual district programs is beyond the scope of this Bulletin's format. Instead, three writing programs, each affecting more than one district, are featured.

Each of the three programs approaches the complex job of teaching writing from a different angle. The Coos County ESD Composition Improvement Project focuses on writing as a three-step composing process of prewriting, writing, and postwriting. The Valley Educational Consortium's writing curriculum concentrates on a goal-based instructional management system that stresses basic writing conventions and modes of discourse. The Oregon Writing Project concentrates on staff development so that teachers will be more effective instructors of writing.

The chapters of this Bulletin, which distinctly divide the three programs, are actually artificial and for the sake of organization only. In practice, the borders of these programs frequently overlap. For

example, teachers from several school districts in the Valley Educational Consortium have participated in the Oregon Writing Project and have integrated many project ideas into their methods of instruction. Valley Educational Consortium personnel have also visited the Coos County ESD Project. Teachers who have participated in the Oregon Writing Project have shared ideas for the Coos County ESD folders.

This sharing of expertise and ideas is exciting and necessary for increased improvement in writing programs and in student composition ability. Through such dedicated work and open sharing, the fate of writing in Oregon is indeed promising.

# Coos County ESD's Composition Improvement Project

One effort to develop a comprehensive writing program is the Composition Improvement Project under the direction of the Coos County ESD. The district describes the project as "a teacher-developed, teacher-tested writing program designed to satisfy requirements for the composition strand of a total language arts curriculum. It provides a sequential development of student writing skills beginning with kindergarten and continuing through grade 12."

This chapter traces the development of the Composition Improvement Project, explains how it provides sequential development of student writing skills, presents its several advantages, and summarizes preliminary evidence of the program's success.

## The Project's History

The program began in 1978, when North Bend and Coos Bay school districts participated in a statewide assessment of basic student skills. The assessment revealed that, in general, the two districts' student composition skills needed improvement. Consequently, in spring 1979, the Coos County ESD applied for and received Title IV-C funding to develop a comprehensive writing program.

An early philosophical decision stressed the need for classroom teacher involvement in the development of the project. Project goals were to be gleaned not only from outside research but also from North Bend and Coos Bay teachers' decisions about what they felt their students needed to learn about composition. Accordingly, Ann Ulum, a former

elementary teacher and then an acting elementary school principal in the Coos Bay School District, was hired to direct the project in August 1979. In November a committee of volunteer teachers was formed to begin developing a new composition program.

The first committee of teachers was made up of representatives from fourth, fifth, and sixth grade classrooms. The project staff began by developing materials for these grade levels, because they felt that students at these levels had mastered enough motor and reading skills to be able to concentrate more exclusively on composition skills. Building principals from each grade school in the two districts containing fourth-sixth grade classrooms selected one teacher from those grades to serve on the committee. Director Ann Ulum interviewed teachers and selected them with two criteria in mind: (1) the teacher indicated an interest in and a commitment to the teaching of composition, and (2) the teacher showed potential as an inservice instructor since the new program would eventually have to be shared with many other teachers.

As work on the project progressed, teacher volunteers were added from all grade levels. The total committee finally consisted of eleven teachers from kindergarten through third grades, fifteen teachers from fourth through sixth grades, and ten secondary teachers. Teachers received no pay for their work, though they did receive three hours of graduate credit through the University of Oregon.

The first task after the selection of the committee members was to decide on a general philosophy upon which to base the new program. The

The committee expressed the following needs that they intended to meet through the Composition Improvement Project:

1. The need for a K-12 sequenced composition program
2. The need to have composition taught as a three-step process of prewriting, writing, and postwriting.
3. The need to expose students to all kinds of writing
4. The need to provide teachers with a composition program that would systematically cover all district composition goals for their grade level
5. The need to provide teachers with a composition program that was convenient to use with all technical components built in

With these needs in mind the committee began working on the project. Ulum read available research on composition and composition programs and kept the committee members informed. In an interview with the author, she said, "If they had discovered an already published program to buy which would have met the teachers' defined needs, the districts would have bought it." But since the committee felt there was no one program on the market that covered all their needs, the committee started from the beginning collecting ideas from research, from their own circle, and from other teachers in the district. Teachers not on the committee who felt they had particularly effective composition activities could write out the activities' goals and descriptions on forms provided by the ESD Composition Improvement Project. The committee would then consider these ideas.

Rather than divide their tasks among small groups, all the teachers chose to work together on every phase of the project so that each of the

teacher-developers had a knowledge of how the entire program was put together. This knowledge is now invaluable as the developers become inservice instructors and introduce other teachers to the program.

Ulum believes that program development by teachers has other advantages. First, teachers are in the best position to know what they and their students need in a learning situation. Second, the teachers who developed the project and those who field-tested it feel a strong sense of ownership of the program. She reports that teachers who worked on the project feel that their time was well spent. They are enthusiastic as well as knowledgeable inservice instructors.

While gathering ideas for composition activities, the committee also compiled a set of composition curriculum goals. The committee then developed a kit for each grade level that contained from fifty to sixty-five activity folders. (The folders and their contents will be described in detail below.) Each activity was keyed to the main list of curriculum goals. Each activity folder and eventually entire kits were field tested.

In the field testing, a teacher-developer was paired with another teacher from approximately the same grade level from the North Bend and Coos Bay School Districts. Field testing teachers would receive instructions from their partners, would use the activity or kit for the required time, and then would provide feedback to the teacher-developer. Each activity and each kit was field tested by several teachers. On the basis of the field testers' feedback, the committee revised the material.

Revision took many forms. Some activities that didn't work well in classroom practice or that didn't accomplish the intended goal were

completely discarded. Other activities were added to fill in gaps in the learning sequence. Occasionally, field testers and developers discovered that an activity required knowledge of too many skills unfamiliar to students at their level, so the activity was divided into smaller activities. The revision process is ongoing, especially with folders being added or rearranged. The project continues to be teacher-developed, teacher-field tested, teacher-revised, and teacher inserviced.

Inservice training is provided at the building level since each school has at least one teacher who has been part of the development of the program. Each building has two inservice sessions, the first one lasting from 45 minutes to 2 hours. It covers basic composition skills and basic instructions for the kits. The second session, about the same length but about two months after teachers begin using the kits, concerns editing skills of both teachers and students, and questions, comments, and suggestions teachers might have about the kits. Since there is in each school a teacher knowledgeable of the program, teachers who encounter problems have an immediate resource to turn to.

As of this writing only the kits from grades 4 through 6 have been certified by the state. The Coos County ESD hopes that by the end of this summer the programs for grades K through 8 will be totally revised and certified. As kits are state certified, the teacher-developers are taking their kits to other school districts in Coos County. Myrtle Point, Coquille, and Bandon school districts have all used some of the CIP materials. The teacher-developers provide two inservice sessions for these districts. The first session is for the entire district and concerns

composition in general. Teachers discuss such topics as what skills are or are not important in learning to write and the place of composition across the curriculum. In a second session, the teacher-developers meet with elementary teachers by grade level (and will meet with secondary language arts teachers when secondary kits are certified) to explain the workings of the kits.

## Development of Skills Through CIP Kits

The Composition Improvement Project has developed or is in the process of developing a kit for every grade level, K-12. Each kit is made of sturdy and colorful cardboard and is the size of a small filing box, designed to be a portable and convenient holder for fifty to sixty-five 9" x 12" activity folders. For the fourth through sixth grades, at the request of the teachers, the folders have been arranged in a fall, winter, spring sequence. For the rest of the kits, folders are arranged according to type of activity, whether prewriting, writing, or postwriting. However, teachers are always free to rearrange their kits for their own convenience.

The filing tab of each folder indicates the title of the activity and whether it is primarily an exercise in prewriting, writing, or post-writing. Printed on the inside of the folder is the following information: the title of the activity, the specific learning goal intended, the estimated duration of the activity, materials, and preparation needed, and instructions. Each folder contains all materials necessary to complete the activity. These may include transparencies, ditto masters, literature excerpts, pictures for motivation, or student writing models.

The kits provide a wide variety of activities. At the primary level an activity may take only fifteen minutes; at the secondary level an activity may require several days to complete. The kits include, among other things, activities in language patterning, sentence combining and sentence expanding, paragraph development, essay development, poetry writing, editing, and free and focused journal writing. Most of these general activity categories are repeated each year, though individual activities become more and more complex and advanced.

Each activity is keyed to a specific goal in the comprehensive list of composition curriculum goals that the committee developed. These goals with the activities that support them are outlined at the beginning of each kit so that a teacher may quickly and conveniently locate an activity for the goal being worked on. These goals provide the framework for the scope and sequence of the program.

In addition to the single activity folders and the outline of goals and activities, each kit includes at the front a teacher's guide folder that explains the philosophy and use of the kit. Each kit also contains a folder full of suggestions for motivating student writers. For the primary grades some of these suggestions are called story starters; at the secondary level, writing starters. Most of the kits provide information and instruction folders on the use of journal writing and peer editing groups in a composition program. There is also a reproducible check-off sheet for the teacher to use to record class or individual student progress.

## Advantages of CIP

The primary advantage of the CIP kits is their flexibility. Teachers may choose to teach the activities in the folders straight through in the order suggested by the kits. Or, since each folder is identified with a specific goal, teachers may easily choose to teach writing units based on an individual goal. Teachers may use some folders as extra help for students having difficulties mastering a specific composition skill or as extra credit for advanced students. Since goals are clearly specified, teachers may correlate activity goals with the goals in their own textbooks. Teachers may eliminate folders that don't work well in their classrooms or add some of their own composition activities in extra folders. The program provides ideas and sequence, but, as Ulum pointed out, the flexibility of the folder format "keeps the program vital and open-ended."

A second advantage is the positive influence the kits' composition activities have on student progress in other areas of the language arts curriculum. The CIP is not specifically designed to teach grammar and spelling, though Coos Bay and North Bend school districts' teachers augment the kits with grammar and spelling exercises. Nevertheless, the program iteself, according to Ulum, "teaches grammar and spelling effectively. The grammar and spelling that the kids learn by writing is the grammar and spelling that is important to them." Teachers feel that students who come to enjoy writing through the composition activities in the kits will want to learn how to write correctly what they plan to express. Peer editing, which the CIP encourages, also requires a knowledge of correct grammar and spelling. Having students read their papers aloud to a peer editing group

also aids reading skills.

A third advantage of the program is the convenience and portability of the kits. Teachers who don't have their own permanent classroom can easily carry the boxes around with them. Papers can be collected and placed in the appropriate activity folder so that instructions for and the goal of the activity are readily available not only for the classroom teacher, but also for readers or substitute teachers who might have to correct the assignment. Since all materials and instructions are provided in the kits, substitute teachers find folders convenient to teach from.

## Results of CIP

Since the program has not long been in use, evidence of student improvement in composition is just beginning to become available. The district has been giving pre-post writing tests to every student in grades 4 through 6 every year since 1979. Last year pre-post tests were given to grade 4 through 8 students. This year pretests were given in grades 4-12 and posttests are scheduled for later this year.

These tests are developed by the project, but they are modeled after the tests used in the statewide assessment. Each test is holistically scored on a 1 to 4 scale of quality by two trained readers, usually substitute teachers who work within the county.

An overall improvement in student composition skills is evident. Ulum reports that in 1979 approximately 14 percent of the students tested were at the lowest levels of competency. Tests from spring 1981 indicate that the percentage of students at those same lowest levels is between 2 and 4 percent. She said, "We are seeing that as kids become

more involved with composition, the kids who would ordinarily receive poor scores aren't there. We are cutting down on poor scores."

With this encouraging evidence the Coos County ESD continues to work on the CIP. The committee hopes to have the entire project for grades K through 12 revised, certified, and copyrighted by fall 1982. The program should be easily exportable into other districts' language arts programs. Anyone wishing further information on the project may contact:

Composition Improvement Project
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Coos County ESD
1350 Teakwood
Coos Bay, OR 97420
(503) 269-1611

# The Valley Educational Consortium's Writing Program

For the past three and one-half years the Valley Educational Consortium has been working on developing curriculum and assessment procedures for a writing program for grades 1 through 12. Consortium members' work has taken three directions: (1) the development of program and course goals as well as performance indicators for those goals in a scope and sequence curriculum, (2) the development of curriculum-based test items for evaluating mechanical writing skills, and other assessment procedures for evaluating student writing samples, and (3) the study of the relationship of leading standardized tests to the Valley Educational Consortium's writing curriculum. This chapter will give a brief description of the consortium itself and then will present the development, printed resources, and findings of the program.

## History of the Valley Educational Consortium

The Valley Educational Consortium (VEC) is, as defined in its writing curriculum guide, "a federation of several school districts in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties, the Education Service Districts that serve these counties, Western Oregon State College, and the Teaching Research Division of the Oregon State System of Higher Education."

VEC began operating informally in 1972 as eight or ten people from Marion, Polk, and Yamhill county school districts got together to discuss various ways that neighboring districts might share personnel and expertise in the development of improved educational programs. The group's primary concern at that time was teacher education and preparation. The group

was responding to the 1972 Teacher Standards and Practices Commission's process standards, which were to be used in the development of new teacher education programs. Teachers and administrators from the school districts joined with Western Oregon State College (then called Oregon College of Education) to develop a competency-based elementary preparation program.

Since then, the consortium has extended its work into other areas where there is need for collaborative effort. In 1975, in response to the first draft of the State Department of Education's minimum standards, the Teaching Research Division and the college worked with member districts to develop initial competency statements. At that time the ESDs serving the three counties joined the consortium. In 1976, the consortium incorporated as a nonprofit corporation, became formally organized, and gained more member school districts. VEC activity continued to expand, providing resources and expertise to help districts implement PL 94-142 and the Standards for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Oregon.

With the advent of the standards, the consortium began to focus its energies on designing and implementing a comprehensive approach to school improvement. Committees of teachers and administrators, assisted by ESD, college, and Teaching Research Division staff, began developing curriculum guides in the area of basic skills. To date, VEC has developed guides in reading, mathematics, speaking, listening, and writing. In the past nine months the effort has grown to include other curriculum areas, such as science, and other specific skills areas, such as reasoning.

Each guide already written contains background information on the development of the guide, program and course goals along with the perfor-

mance indicators that support those goals, scope and sequence tables covering grades 1 through 12, and guidelines for assessment procedures. Because the consortium serves many diverse districts, VEC guides clearly state that they "do not deal with methods of instruction or ways of interacting with students. It is assumed that teachers will vary their instructional procedures to accommodate the needs and characteristics of their students."

An April 1981 article in The VEC Voice, VEC's newsletter, provides a summary of the consortium's mission and membership. It reads, "The Consortium is a far reaching enterprise. Its work extends to virtually every sphere of schooling, from curriculum development, to program costing, to research on school effects. Represented in the Corsortium's governing bodies and work teams are superintendents, central office staff, building managers, teachers, college faculty, and ESD personnel. It's activities are varied and wide-ranging."

The remainder of this chapter focuses on VEC's activities in the area of writing.

## Development of the Writing Program

The consortium began work on the writing program in 1979. Because teachers and administrators in member districts felt that no existing single textbook series covered all the skills necessary for a well-ordered, comprehensive writing program, the consortium decided to build its own curriculum guide in writing. The consortium also wanted to provide a consistent program for students who transferred across districts, while

allowing for flexibility of individual district, school, or teacher choice of materials and methods.

The basic philosophy behind the guide was a commitment to a goal-based model of instruction. As the current VEC Writing Curriculum Guide states, "goals [will be] formulated in clear language and then communicated to all those involved in or affected by instructional programs." Since there is always a danger of viewing course goals as the end-points of learning, the VEC clarified its position on goal mastery, graduation requirements, and basic skill development in a policy that reads in part: "Demonstrated proficiency in the basic skills judged to be necessary for high school work, and demonstrated ability to apply these skills successfully in high school courses are both required as a condition for graduation." This philosophy committed the writing committee to develop a program that would allow for writing skills development as well as application of these skills.

A group of language arts and English teachers from grades 3, 6, 8, and 10 from the Woodburn, Silverton Union High, and Victor Point Elementary school districts, with assistance by Western Oregon State College and Teaching Research Division, started on the guide. The committee first looked at the state standards. Using these standards as guides, the committee next examined their district's current goal statements. They discovered that most of the goal statements were too vague and that the existing writing programs emphasized some areas of the writing processes heavily, but ignored other areas entirely. Paul Clute, current group leader of the writing curriculum committee, told the writer that "none

of the existing sets of goals were very useful, but they were a starting point for thinking about new goals."

In addition to looking at old goal statements within VEC districts, members brought to the discussions about goals and performance indicators their own experiences as language arts teachers. They also examined research literature on writing and the teaching of writing, materials from English departments, and reports of other curriculum goal structures that consortium members had examined.

The committee divided into groups by grade level. Teachers from third grade classes worked on writing goals and performance indicators for grades 1 through 3. Sixth grade teachers worked on grades 4 through 6, eighth grade teachers on seventh and eighth grades, and tenth grade teachers on a combined program for grades 9 through 12. These latter grades were combined to allow the flexibility needed in a high school English program with electives that may be attended by students from several grade levels. After the subgroups came back together, the total program was written and examined by the entire group.

By spring 1980, the first draft of the curriculum guide was ready for review and necessary revision. The writing curriculum guide outlines the five steps of this process:

1. A review of the goals and indicators by faculty responsible for writing instruction at Woodburn, Silverton Union High, and Victor Point Elementary;

2. A revision of the goals and indicators based on this review;

3. A review of the revised goals and indicators by a panel of three experts outside of the consortium. (One expert was drawn from the public schools; one from a teacher preparation faculty; and one was recognized for his expertise in the writing area);

4. A review by the faculties of all seven consortium districts that were participating in curriculum development; and

5. A revision of the guide based on information from steps three and four.

In August 1981, VEC published a "final" version of the writing curriculum guide and one teacher's handbook for each grade level 1 through 6, one for grades 7 and 8 combined, and one for grades 9 through 12 combined. This "final" version has already been revised in January 1982 to make course goals and indicators read more clearly, to tighten the scope and sequence, and to make a clearer distinction between goals that pertain to basic writing conventions and those that pertain to modes of discourse.

While work on the curriculum guide progressed, the committee also had a second task, that of developing instruments of assessment that would determine goal attainment. This work first began when the writing curriculum committee tried to write a bank of test items, referenced to VEC writing goals. They soon discovered that attainment of approximately 70 percent of the goals and performance indicators could not be measured by objective tests. Although the committee recognized that objective tests had value in the total assessment program, they started developing assessment procedures that would use holistic, primary trait, and analytic scoring methods.

The committee assisted other VEC members who were engaged in determining whether leading standardized tests used by consortium districts matched the VEC curriculum in mathematics, reading, and writing. They hoped to discover standardized tests that would prove to be valid instruments for the VEC curricula.

Development and revision still go on. In the near future, the writing committee will meet with other VEC members who are working on reasoning skills to discover how the two areas might be incorporated. There has been discussion on developing remediation methods for exceptional students. Members are still occupied with making assessment more valid. Although work continues, much has been accomplished since fall 1979. The next two sections will deal with the accomplishments.

## The Guide and the Handbooks for the Writing Curriculum

The Valley Educational Consortium has published two types of printed aids for school districts and teachers. Both are intended "to assist teachers in planning instruction and monitoring student progress." The first is a curriculum guide on the entire writing program. The second is a handbook for each grade. Whereas curriculum guides are available in schools and departments and to teachers upon request, handbooks are made available to each teacher.

### The Curriculum Guide

The Curriculum Guide for Writing contains the framework for the entire writing program for grades 1 through 12. The guide's introduction states: "It is anticipated that the writing guide will serve as a core element in a goal-based instructional management system. The goals contained in the guide will be at the center of the system, for it is in reference to these goals that instruction will be planned, student progress will be tracked and reported, and programs will be evaluated."

The guide and the goals and performance indicators it contains are based on four assumptions about the teaching and learning of writing. These are specified in the guide:

1. All effective writing expresses ideas in a clear and appropriate form, contains elements of creativity, and utilizes good mechanics.

2. Students should have the experience of writing for practical, persuasive, and creative purposes.

3. Five features of writing that can be used to provide scope and sequence to the writing program are content, structure, grammar, spelling, and handwriting.

4. The development of writing skills is at the very center of the career development of students. Limited writing skills severely reduce career opportunities. In this sense, each program and grade level goal in writing relate directly or indirectly to a student's career development. It is expected that teachers will use instructional activities that focus on the application of writing skills to life roles and careers.

Three program goals are the foundation for the overall outcomes of VEC's instructional program in writing. They are designed to be consistent with the requirements of the State Board of Education. These goals are as follows:

1. The student will be able to use appropriate mechanics and conventions in communicating ideas clearly, accurately, and legibly.

2. The student will be able to use a variety of methods and forms of discourse to express ideas in writing.

3. The student will be able to adapt writing to a variety of purposes and audiences.

The Curriculum Guide for Writing, copyrighted in August 1981, lists twenty-two course goals. The January 1982 revision has combined and rearranged some of the goals so that now seventeen goals cover the same

skills. Eight general writing-skills goals cover handwriting, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph development, and word choice. Nine goals dealing with specific writing skills cover mode of discourse and are directed toward developing student skills in writing descriptions, narratives, poetry, correspondence, outlines, summaries, expositions, journalistic writings, and applications and resumes. Each course goal is labelled with a capital letter for easy reference later in the guide.

The guide includes a Scope and Sequence Summary Table that presents all course goals and all performance indicators that pertain to these goals with the grades to which the goals are to be applied. For example, the table indicates that all students, grades 1 through 12, are to be working on punctuation skills, whereas development of journalistic writing skills is not required until grade 7.

The remaining pages of the summary table present the goals and the performance indicators that apply to them. Each goal has from two to ten performance indicators listed under it. A number or numbers in parentheses follow each performance indicator to designate the grade levels at which the performance indicator will be taught. Here is an example from the summary table:

GOAL F: THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO WRITE SENTENCES

The student will:

1. write or copy different kinds of sentences: declarative and interrogative sentences having a subject and verb. (1)
2. write different kinds of sentences: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory sentences (2-8), and imperative sentences. (3-8)

3. write simple, compound and complex sentences. (7-12)
4. write sentences having consistent voice. (7-12)
5. write sentences having parallel construction. (9-12)

The curriculum guide continues with Grade Level Summaries that list the program's course goals and performance indicators again, this time by grade level. There is one grade level summary for each grade 1 through 6, one combining 7 and 8, and one combining 9 through 12. The guide concludes with a section on guidelines for assessment (discussed below).

Handbooks

The handbooks, like the guide, contain the program's assumptions, program and course goals, and scope and sequence summary table. However, the handbooks were designed at the request of teachers who wanted a practical and easy-to-use version of the curriculum guide that would focus on individual grades. Consequently, the handbooks contain only those grade-level summaries (taken from the guide) for the grade level the handbook covers and for the grade levels immediately above and below that grade. Summaries for the grades above and below the actual grade level allow teachers to serve students who are working one grade level above or below their actual grade level.

Grade-level instructional guides are a feature unique to the handbook. VEC's writing curriculum committee developed them in response to teachers' request that space be provided in the handbooks to note textbook pages and other resources valuable in teaching the goals or to note effective assessment procedures. Also the developers felt that the handbook was an appropriate place to show cross-referencing between the writing curriculum and the speaking, reading, listening, and career awareness curricula.

Each grade-level instructional guide page is divided into columns that relay the following information: (1) each course goal and performance indicator to be covered at the specific grade level, (2) the numbers of the program goal to which the course goals relate, (3) cross-references to the listening, reading, and speaking curriculum guides, (4) an indication whether the indicator is to be introduced for the first time or extended from previous grades. Two additional columns are blank so that teachers can fill them in with (5) references from textbooks and other sources and (6) effective assessment procedures. In an appendix is a chart that shows cross-references between the VEC's writing curriculum guide and the Oregon Department of Education's Career Awareness/Exploration Curriculum Kits.

The handbooks, like the guide, end with guidelines for assessment.

## Assessment Procedures

In its commitment to the valid assessment of student progress, the Valley Educational Consortium has explored many assessment procedures. For the writing program, consortium members believe there is a purpose and a need for both objective tests and writing samples. The curriculum guide explains:

> Each method of assessment has particular strengths and limitations. Objective tests are attractive because they are efficient to score. In addition, the results they produce are highly reliable since the tests are scored in exactly the same way for each student each time the test is administered. On the other hand, objective tests do not measure many of the composition skills identified in the VEC writing guide.
>
> The use of writing samples appears to overcome some of the limitations in objective tests. Writing samples can be

> structured so as to provide evidence on students' ability to meet many of the VEC goals that are not easily handled by objective tests. However, scoring writing samples is more costly of time and personnel than is the scoring of objective tests.

This section describes progress the consortium has made in adopting or developing and pilot testing various assessment procedures.

Objective Tests

VEC has been working in two areas of objective testing. Consortium members on the writing committee have begun to build a goal-referenced test item bank. They have also studied the usefulness to the VEC program of leading standardized tests.

In the past year and a half, the consortium's writing committee has built a bank of several hundred test items that are directly referenced to goals and indicators in the writing curriculum guide. The items are multiple choice and cover some of the basic composition skills such as student ability to punctuate, spell, and capitalize correctly and to identify correct grammar. Glen Fielding, a VEC consultant from Teaching Research Division, stated that "by April 15 (1982) the writing program will have multiple choice test items that address every indicator in the basic writing conventions."

The consortium has also chosen to analyze leading objective tests to see if one or more tests could validly be used to assess curriculum goals. Fielding said, "The analysis was important because previously standardized tests had been used as a matter of course. We wanted to see how well they matched the curriculum that has been developed in the consortium."

The analysis has focused on six objective tests of language usage: The California Achievement Test (CAT), the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), the Science Research Associates Achievement Series (SRA), the Portland Achievement Levels Test, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and the Stanford Achievement Test. All six tests have been examined for curricular validity, and the last three have been examined for concurrent validity.

The study of curricular validity was done to check the match between the skills and knowledge assessed by the standardized test and the skills and knowledge desired by the VEC writing curriculum. The study of concurrent validity was done to check the match between the tests' results and the results in three other areas of assessment used in the VEC districts. The curriculum guide explains, "The first [study of concurrent validity] concerned the match between scores produced by one objective test and the scores produced by another objective test. The second concerned the match between students' scores on the objective tests and teacher judgment of students' overall writing ability. The third type of concurrent validity concerned the match between scores on the objective tests and scores on the writing samples."

The findings of the analysis conducted in 1981 are reported in the writing curriculum guide:

> With respect to curricular validity, the major finding was that the match between each of the objective tests and the goals and indicators in the VEC writing guide was relatively low. In no case were the items on a test related to more than 43 percent of the indicators in the guide.
>
> In contrast to the finding regarding curricular validity, the concurrent validity of the tests was high. Results produced by one test generally were consistent with those produced by another.

> Scores on each of the tests were quite consistent with teachers' judgments about the level of skill proficiency of their students.
>
> Results on each of the standardized tests were highly related to results on the holistically scored writing samples. This is a particularly encouraging finding because it suggests that the language usage skills measured by objective tests contribute in important ways to actual writing effectiveness.

The results of the primary trait and analytic scoring have just recently been tabulated and are what Fielding calls "semi-findings." He does report, however, that the consortium committee discovered a consistently positive relationship between results on the holistic assessments and results of the primary trait and analytic scoring assessments.

Based on these preliminary findings, the consortium is designing performance tests using writing samples that will:

> a) specify for students the criteria that will be used to evaluate their papers; b) provide scoring guidelines for teachers that are explicitly linked to the goals and indicators of goal attainment contained in the VEC curriculum guide; and c) include student papers that illustrate the kind of writing expected at each scoring level. (From A Synopsis of the VEC's Work in Assessing Student Achievement in the Basic Skills).

## Conclusion

The Valley Educational Consortium's writing curriculum and assessment procedures are very new. Specific results of student writing improvement do not yet exist, because the pilot tests have been for testing the instruments rather than student outcomes. Goals and assessment procedures continue to be refined as necessary to make the program valid and well organized.

The early VEC commitment to sharing with other districts remains. Some members of the writing curriculum committee have conducted inservice

sessions for districts upon request. The VEC writing group leader, Paul Clute, is enthusiastic about sharing the products and findings of the past three and a half years. He says, "We would be glad to help anybody we can. We know we don't have all the answers, but unless we talk, we'll never find any of them."

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# The Oregon Writing Project

The Oregon Writing Project has touched teachers and positively affected writing curriculums in varying degrees in at least thirty-nine school districts all over the state. Its unique format of "teachers teaching teachers" has caused its influence to spread to all corners of the state in only four years. Its main focus is staff development in the area of composition. Although the participants have been predominately English teachers and elementary teachers who teach language arts, the project's enrollments show participation by school principals, teachers in subject areas outside language arts, and in a few cases school board members and parents.

Those who have participated in a summer institute or in inservice during the school year are enthusiastic about the program. To show how and why this enthusiasm is generated, this chapter describes the Oregon Writing Project and some of the teaching methods propagated by its participants.

## History

The Oregon Writing Project is an affiliate of the Bay Area Writing Project which was begun at the University of California at Berkeley in 1974. The Bay Area Writing Project was a form of inservice training designed, as one of its pamphlets states, to be "a cooperative school/university program to improve the writing preparation of all students, elementary through university." Twenty-five teachers of composition were selected as summer fellows at that first summer institute. During five weeks of intensive meetings, these teachers shared their own classroom

strategies and composition exercises. They heard lectures about composition research. They themselves wrote and shared their writing with one another in small groups. After the summer institute was over, these twenty-five teachers were considered composition consultants who led inservice sessions during the school year for other language arts teachers in the Bay Area.

During the next two summers the Bay Area Writing Project continued as teachers shared ideas, expertise, and their own writing. In 1976, the project began to look for six possible sites outside California. At this same time Oregon was showing its concern over the improvement of writing skills in the state. An Oregon State Composition Advisory Committee, established in 1974, evidenced high commitment to increasing the quality of composition programs. In 1976, the advisory committee wrote a set of recommendations for improving writing instruction in all educational institutions in the state. This emphasis on writing instruction improvement in grades K through 13 fit well into the philosophy of the Bay Area Writing Project and made Oregon a likely candidate to apply for and receive a writing project.

In 1977, a three-district consortium, made up of Beaverton, Salem, and Central Point school districts, began to work to get the funds needed to match a Bay Area Writing Project grant so that the Oregon site could become a reality. They applied for and received a Title IV-C grant that furnished the needed monies, and the Bay Area Writing Project gave the consortium the promised matching funds. The summer of 1977 saw the first Oregon Writing Project summer institute. Oregon's project differed slightly from the original program in that it was held in three different locations--Beaverton, Salem, and Central Point. However, the project managed to achieve

continuity among all three sites by having the same guest lecturers (university personnel) appear at all three locations. Some of these first summer fellows were brought together later at a 1979 summer institute at Southern Oregon State College, called OWP II. There they received additional training for inservice consulting.

In 1978, a more traditional university-affiliated site was established at the University of Oregon. It was funded by the original Bay Area Writing Project, the Autzen Foundation of Portland, and the Carpenter Foundation of Medford. This site, known as the University of Oregon's Oregon Writing Project (UO/OWP), also shares guest lecturers and information with the OWP and is considered a part of the same entity. To date, eighty-three teachers from all grades levels have attended summer institutes at the UO/OWP.

As the Oregon Writing Project grew, so did the original Bay Area Writing Project. Upon receiving funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and private foundations, the Bay Area Writing Project has expanded to become the National Writing Project. The NWP is composed of eighty sites in the United States and two sites abroad. The writing project movement has spread rapidly.

In an article about the success of the writing projects, Sam Watson of the University of North Carolina quotes Paul Diederich of Educational Testing Service as saying, "Writing Projects have stirred up English teachers to an extent that I have seldom if ever seen....I now believe that the Bay Area Writing Project really has started a movement that is sweeping the country....With all my bias in favor of hard data, I am already pretty sure that this is one of those ideas that will last." The next section will cover some of the reasons why writing projects have proved so successful.

## Philosophy and Structure

The philosophy and practices of the writing projects are based on a set of six assumptions published in a Bay Area Writing Project pamphlet. This section examines these assumptions and their manifestations.

Assumption One: "The writing problem is shared by both the universities and the schools; it can best be addressed by cooperatively funded university/school efforts."

The realization that the responsibility for effective writing programs is shared among elementary schools, secondary schools, and universities has had several positive results. First of all, it has eliminated within the projects much of the scapegoating that goes on among different educational levels. Teachers from all levels work together, and each has a chance to see the value and limitations of the others' programs. Second, cooperative efforts among all levels result in greater pooled resources of personnel, expertise, knowledge, and funds.

Assumptions Two and Three: "Most teachers have not been adequately prepared as teachers of writing." "Although much is known about the teaching of writing, most teachers are unaware of that knowledge."

Writing projects are set up to fill in the large gaps left in language arts teachers' education concerning composition. Summer institutes meet from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. for twenty days (the UO/OWP meets five days a week for four weeks). During this intense block of time, teachers are introduced to current research in writing and to new strategies for teaching writing in presentations made by their colleagues

and guest specialists. There are no passive observers; all teachers actually participate in the presentations as if they were in an elementary, secondary, or university writing class. Consequently, although teachers receive a tremendous amount of new knowledge in a short period of time, they retain most of the information because they have actively practiced with the presenter.

Assumption Four: "The best teacher of teachers is usually another teacher who has had success in a similar situation."

Although outside guest presenters lecture at writing project summer institutes, most of the time is spent either in presentations by teachers or in editing groups where teachers critique each others' work. Presentations are usually based on instructional strategies that a language arts or composition teacher has successfully employed in the classroom. The presentations may or, more commonly, may not be based on research. They cover any aspect of writing. Examples from the Oregon Writing Project include presentations on motivating student writers, sentence combining, poetry writing, outlining, making metaphors, writing clinics, and writing a children's book.

The final product of this assumption is the collection of new ideas each writing project participant receives by the end of the institute. A second, intangible product is the warm experience of positive peer-recognition as each strategy is shared with and practiced by colleagues.

Assumption Five: "Successful teachers of writing can be identified; the best practices of successful teachers can be effectively demonstrated to others."

All summer fellow candidates go through a selection process before they are admitted to a summer institute. First, teachers must be endorsed by their school districts. Second, teachers must include with their applications a statement of their background and experience in teaching writing and a description of the strategy they would be willing to present at the institute. Institute leaders review these materials and then select suitable candidates. Third, institute leaders usually conduct personal interviews with each candidate. The Bay Area Writing Project strongly recommends that no more than twenty-five instructors participate in any one summer session. The selection process enables institute leaders to pick the best twenty-five teachers.

As mentioned above, those teachers who have attended the summer institute are then considered consultants. They take back to their own school districts and neighboring districts the ideas, knowledge, and skills they have gained. They often hold inservice workshops that might last an afternoon, a day, or ten weeks. The more support districts are willing to give these teachers and the project, the more effect the teachers will be able to have.

Assumption Six: "Teachers of writing must themselves write." This is the key to the writing projects' success. Early writing project developers realized that too often teachers who must teach composition never write themselves. They forget what a painstaking and ego-involving process writing is. They assign to students assignments they would never want to do themselves. They remove themselves from the reality of composition.

Writing projects require teachers to plunge back into that reality. Not only do they have to practice all the writing exercises presented in the presentations, but they also have to compose at least four original pieces of writing during the institute. These compositions are shared and critiqued in small groups. Teachers are then faced with the reality of having someone judge their written work as they have judged the written work of their students. As Dorothy Bean of Cedar Park Junior High in Beaverton School District commented, "We go through all the agonies the children go through. I think that's an important step, because that agony is easy to forget when you are teaching."

Teachers report that the first time they divide into small groups, they do indeed feel the agony of a tremendous lack of confidence. Elementary teachers feel they will be looked down upon by teachers from higher levels. High school and university teachers fear that gaps in their education will be exposed. Everyone is nervous about hearing immediate criticism from immediate critics. After the first small group session, however, teachers invariably feel more confident about their ability to write. Participants are very supportive of each other because they all are aware of the pain and destructiveness in harsh criticism. Positive points in the work are always emphasized, and negative criticism is handled with tact. Participants read the work of their peers and recognize that the quality of their own work is comparable. This sharing of written expression, both in small groups and in the large group as participants in the presentation, allows all teachers at all grade levels

to see that the writing of others does not appear "magically" and that others face similar difficulties in expressing themselves on paper.

From this writing and sharing, teacher confidence in their own ability to write grows and with it their confidence in teaching writing. Armed with this renewed confidence and with new knowledge, teachers return to their classrooms envigorated and refreshed. Every teacher whom the author interviewed and others reported in journal articles have stated that the writing project was one of the most valuable educational experiences of their lives. Many are willing to agree with Marilyn Savage, a high school English teacher at La Grande, when she says, "I have a master's degree plus 60 credits. I'd trade all of my education as far as teacher education is concerned for the Oregon Writing Project. It is the best educational experience in my career."

The next two sections discuss how the Oregon Writing Project and its participants have affected certain school districts in the state.

## Five Main Strategies

Although literally hundreds of teaching strategies and issues have been presented at summer institutes and inservice workshops through the Oregon Writing Project and its University of Oregon affiliate, five of these warrant a close look because they repeatedly occur among the school districts affected by the project. Although these composition practices have been followed by educators outside the realm of writing projects, they have been propagated in Oregon by project participants. These strategies are editing groups, journal writing, sentence combining, talk-write, and writing across the curriculum.

Editing groups. Glatthorn states that numerous researchers have concluded from carefully conducted studies that "peer feedback and peer editing can effect improvements in writing." Editing groups are a way to provide peer feedback.

Editing groups vary, but usually teachers divide their classes into small groups of two to five students who respond to each others' written work. Each student reads his or her composition aloud to the group. Compositions are often dittoed or xeroxed so that each student in the group has copies of the works to be critiqued. Most teachers carefully structure the groups by providing guidelines for criticism or restricting editing to specific skills. For example, elementary school students might only be required to look for capitalization or spelling errors, whereas high school students might look at organization and content in a work. Teachers who have gone through the project usually focus students' editing on the positive elements in each composition, so that these groups become constructive and nonthreatening.

Editing groups provide an immediate audience for student work. They can decrease the paper-correcting load of composition teachers. Reading papers aloud can positively affect reading skills. Editing groups must be carefully managed but they have been proved an effective composition strategy.

Journal writing. Most teachers who have gone through a writing project have brought back to their composition classes the strategy of journal writing. Students are required to bring to class some kind of bound notebook. (At least one district in Oregon orders notebooks as part

of its consummable inventory). The amount of time students spend writing in their journals varies. Some teachers allot ten minutes each day; some require journal writing for homework. The assignments may be focused or free; that is, students may be given a specific topic to write on or they may write down whatever comes into their minds. Very often teachers write in their own journals while their students are writing in theirs.

Journal writing serves many purposes. Journals are a place for self-expression. Because work in the journals is seldom graded for content or correctness, students feel they can write with less inhibition. Fulwiler states that a journal writing exercise is active participation in education. He writes, "Journal writing will not make passive students miraculously active learners; however, it will make it harder for them to remain passive."

Fulwiler suggests teachers use journal writing as discussion starters, so that students have a chance to collect their thoughts on a given topic. Students may also end a class period with journal writing so that they have a chance to pull together the ideas they have heard during that class. Among other suggestions, he recommends journal writing for problem solving and discussion refocusing. Journal writing is a versatile tool in any classroom.

Sentence combining. Glatthorn points to researchers' discovery that "sentence combining practice will help students write sentences that are more syntactically mature." Sentence combining is taking two or more short sentences and creating one grammatically correct long sentence from them.

Sentence combining exercises may be signalled or open. For example:

Signalled-- Mark wondered SOMETHING.
His sister hadn't written. (WHY)

Result: Mark wondered why his sister hadn't written.

Open-- Teachers have participated in Oregon Writing Projects.
They have learned many new teaching strategies.
They have taken the strategies back to their classrooms.

One Possible Result: Teachers who have participated in Oregon Writing Projects have learned many new teaching strategies that they have taken back to their classrooms.

Researchers believe sentence combining exercises can be adapted to any grade level. Stotsky reports that research evidence links sentence combining with improved reading comprehension. She also cites research that indicates students "enjoyed puzzling out and completing exercises." Because the open exercises frequently allow for several correct answers, sentence combining may open class discussion to stylistic choices in composition.

Talk-write: Many Oregon Writing Project teachers have adopted the talk-write strategy, which applies the close relationship between written and oral language. According to Glatthorn, "Teaching should emphasize and exploit the close connection between "these two forms of language." The directions for a talk-write session are described in an Oregon English article:

> Pair students into teams. (Three or more may be assigned to a team, but the larger the team the longer the process.) Give each team a felt tip pen and a section of butcher paper or newsprint pad taped to the wall. For those teachers with sufficient chalk board, assign each team a section. Using chalk boards or large sheets of paper is important for the student to escape the 8 1/2 x 11" white, lined cell....

> One student of each team will begin as writer, the other as questioner. The writing student will tell the questioner what she/he wants to write. Along the way, the teammate may ask questions about it, serving as a clarifier and encourager. When they are ready to write, when the writer has enough information out, the writer writes and the questioner acts as memory and advisor. When the composition is complete, it may have many sentences crossed out and changes in spelling, punctuation, or sentence or paragraph sequence, but it should say what the student intended. Next, the teammate takes a turn with his own piece of paper, using the same process.

Talk-writing, like journal writing is less threatening than conventional writing exercises and also allows students to gather their thoughts and make choices before they write a finished copy. Like editing groups, talk-writing provides immediate feedback.

Writing across the curriculum. "Writing across the curriculum" is more of an issue than a single strategy. It is based on the belief that writing should be valued and practiced in every subject area so that students realize it is not a skill isolated in the language arts classroom. Glatthorn, in a very helpful chapter on this subject, list three positive results of a writing-across-the-curriculum instructional program:

1. If teachers in such disciplines as science and social studies emphasize writing in their classrooms, students should improve their understanding of those disciplines, for writing is a way of knowing.

2. The student's ability to write will be increased if the student has an opportunity for guided practice in several classrooms, not just in an English class.

3. An all-school emphasis on writing, if it is developed and implemented sensibly and effectively, should be a good vehicle for increasing interdepartmental cooperation.

At the elementary level individual teachers can find ways to incorporate more writing in all subject areas. At the junior high and high school levels the task of incorporating writing across the curriculum becomes complex.

Teachers not involved in English instruction must be trained to assign and assess written work. To help districts with this complex task, the Oregon Writing Project has held two Writing Across the Curriculum workshops during the summer. Participants were either elementary teachers or teachers from subject areas other than English. The workshops were conducted like typical writing project workshops. An evaluation of these teachers' attitudes showed they had become more positive about their own writing and about taking writing into their classrooms.

## Influence in Oregon Schools

Because this Bulletin is not a survey of writing projects, it is impossible to cover all school districts in the state that have been affected by the Oregon Writing Project. The school districts featured in this section were chosen to represent a variety of districts in size, grade level, and location.

Beaverton SD 48J. One of the original sites for the Oregon Writing Project, Beaverton has continued to provide leadership in the project. It has hosted summer institutes every summer since 1977 except one.

Beaverton's own writing program has felt the effects of the project. Lois Finley, curriculum specialist for the district, states that the training language arts teachers received influenced the selection of textbooks in the district. Dorothy Bean, junior high English teacher and Oregon Writing Project fellow, reports that "teachers take varying amounts of Oregon Writing Project methods into their classrooms." She herself uses editing groups every week and says that "students write all the time" in her class. Bean has even taken writing across part of the

Beaverton curriculum by using talk-write methods in social studies classes to help them write improved essays.

Central Point SD 6. The writing project influence has been quite active in Central Point. The district has held summer institutes every summer since 1977. Patty Wixon, Oregon Writing Project director, has led Writing Across the Curriculum workshops as well as a special writing workshop for district administrators to help them improve their own writing.

Teachers are using editing groups from the elementary grades up, as well as talk-write methods and journal writing. An emphasis on writing is obvious throughout the district. For example, Jewett Elementary has an annual Outstanding Students Writing Competition for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Winners are honored at a writing awards assembly and have their names engraved on a displayed trophy. Don Main, sixth grade teacher at Patrick Elementary, says that to find his students a real audience he enters their work in "every kind of writing competition he can find."

Central Point has made some preliminary assessment of the writing project's influence in the district. Patty Wixon reports that verbal SAT scores have increased every year since the writing project came to Central Point. In an assessment report of March 1981, a comparison of holistic scores indicated a greater gain in writing ability for twelfth grade students with project-trained teachers than for those students with nonproject teachers.

Eugene SD 4J. Several Eugene teachers have attended summer institutes and brought back Oregon Writing Project methods to the district. Marilyn

Olson, curriculum specialist for the Lane County ESD and Oregon Writing Project fellow, says that Eugene had discussed emphasizing writing prior to 1977, but that the "Oregon Writing Project gave us a reason to stress it, gave us a context."

The Lane County ESD has been holding a Writing Workshop Series for the past two years. The ten weekly sessions feature lectures and writing exercises presented by district teachers and experts in the writing field. This year's workshop series brought in William Trieglaff, president of Schools without Failure, and Ken Macrorie, author of Writing to Be Read. In 1980-81, 100 teachers attended the series.

Olson believes that the Oregon Writing Project has helped the district focus on the need for writing. A Lane County Literary Book, filled with Lane County students' works, is published by the ESD to honor high writing achievement. Olson says that the Oregon Writing Project has made teachers and administrators more aware of other available writing programs.

La Grande SD 1. In the winter of 1980-81, twenty-two La Grande teachers from grades 2-12 attended ten three-hour workshops for Writing Across the Curriculum. These workshops were led by Oregon Writing Project consultants--teachers in the La Grande district who had attended at least one summer institute. Marilyn Savage, one of the consultants and a La Grande High School English teacher, says that the workshop "opened up the writing program. It came as a revelation to some of the elementary teachers; they found they had a lot to offer (in writing) and that some

of the ideas the high school teachers had could be adapted to the elementary level. Sharing went back and forth."

She believes that the Oregon Writing Project has effected change in the La Grande district's writing assessment procedures. The district has had five workshops to train teachers in holistic scoring procedures.

Lake County SD 7. Lake County's goal is to have every one of the teachers in the district go through Oregon Writing Project workshops. Thus far approximately 70 percent of Lake County teachers have had Oregon Writing Project training in workshops conducted by seven teacher consultants from the district who have attended summer institutes.

Floyda Sauer, one of the consultants and a third grade teacher at Fremont Elementary, reports that students are getting more writing assignments in all subject areas and more essay exams. She believes this is a result of the Oregon Writing Project training. "The teachers who have taken the writing project are feeling more comfortable with their own writing skills, and then it's easier for them to have the students write."

Medford SD 549C. Stephanie Johnson, Title I teacher at McLoughlin Junior High and a summer fellow, listed the effects of the Oregon Writing Project in the Medford district. They are (1) the extensive use of editing groups, (2) the choice of curriculum materials (she points out that the Bay Area and National Writing Projects have influenced textbook publishers and adoptions all over the country), (3) the teaching of sentence combining, (4) the publishing of student work in dentists' offices, local newspapers, and district-published materials, and (5) the recognition of outstanding student writers in writing contests.

The Medford district has also had two school year workshops. To date, fifty-nine teachers and one principal have participated. That principal, Jae Johnson of Jackson Elementary, says he took the workshop so that he could share a common experience with his teachers and could improve his own writing skills.

Sublimity SD 7C. In the past two years, since Esther Heilbronner, second grade teacher at Sublimity Elementary, and one of the mothers in the school district attended a summer institute, Sublimity has made the Oregon Writing Project an all-school program. The school board furnished classroom space and tuition for three graduate credits for the district's ten teachers (who were joined by six other teachers from neighboring districts) to attend a fall series of workshops in 1980. They were led by the two consultants.

Since then the entire writing curriculum has been rewritten to include many of the Oregon Writing Project strategies. Students write daily in journals in all curriculum areas. From grade 3 to grade 8 students meet and critique writing in editing groups. Holistic grading for yearly assessment procedures has been instituted. Heilbronner reports much writing activity exchange among the grade levels. For example, one writing exercise requires second graders to interview eighth graders.

## Conclusion

There can be no doubt that the Oregon Writing Project has greatly affected writing curriculums and teachers all over the state. Personal testimonies reveal enthusiasm and an almost missionary zeal for the program.

Statistical results are hard to come by as yet. Patty Wixon says that "the lack of statistical assessment procedures has plagued the Bay Area Writing Project all along," because when researchers and other educators want tangible proof of the writing projects' success, evidence is scarce. The writing projects are, as Nat Teich, director of the UO/OWP, says, "a humanistic pedagogy that can't be quantified."

However, teachers know that it's working for them, and students are catching their new enthusiasm for writing.

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